

(Pat). His children Oscar (Nada), George (Karen), Eloy (Sef), Fernando (Carol), and Belinda will miss him deeply, as will his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Fernando Vega and in extolling his life of service to others. I ask my colleagues to also join me in extending our most sincere condolences to Fernando Vega's family, for their loss is a great one. I'm very proud to have had the opportunity to know and work with Fernando and even prouder to have called him my friend. There wasn't a finer human being or greater patriot. Through his integrity, leadership and decency, he strengthened our country and our community in countless ways.

HONORING COLONEL MARK C. GARDNER

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Mark C. Gardner and to recognize his lifetime of service to our country.

On June 28, Col. Gardner will retire from the Georgia National Guard after thirty years of sacrifice and service to this great nation.

While he currently serves as the Georgia National Guard's State Inspector General, he has worked in many different capacities. In 1983, Col. Gardner's first assignment was with U.S. Army Missile Command, and he has since been assigned to infantry, maintenance, and forward support duties across the world. His career has taken him to Korea, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq, and several military installations here in the United States.

For his distinguished leadership throughout his career, Col. Gardner has been awarded with decorations like the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korea Defense Service Medal, the Army Reserve Service Medal, the Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

Col. Gardner has played an invaluable role in the U.S. Armed Forces for decades and he will surely be missed.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 11th District of Georgia, my deepest thanks to Col. Gardner for devoting his life to the upholding the Constitution of the United States and to the protection of its citizens. I wish him a happy—and well-deserved—retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF POYANT
SIGNS

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Poyant Signs of New Bedford, Massachusetts, as the company celebrates seventy-five years of business this month.

Founder Maurice J. Poyant first began his signmaking company in 1938, originally operating under the name Artcraft Sign Company. His small business would see great expansion and many changes over the course of the following decades, such as moving into its well-known Acushnet Avenue storefront, the purchase of its first 45-foot crane, and incorporation of the business under the new name Poyant Signs in the 1950s. Several members of the Poyant family would go on to lead the company over the years following Maurice's retirement, including Maurice's son Leonard Poyant and grandson Richard Poyant. As sales continued to increase, Poyant Signs maintained its growth and success, and over the years the company was even able to acquire several competing signage companies. Although it has since outgrown its Acushnet Avenue location, Poyant Signs still calls New Bedford home, and is headquartered today in a modern 45,000 square foot facility located in New Bedford Business Park.

The success of Poyant Signs has continued into the twenty-first century, and today the company stands as the largest sign manufacturer in New England. It serves both well-known local businesses and clients that operate on a national level, and the company has been the recipient of numerous awards within the industry. In 2009, Poyant Signs was honored as a finalist in the Massachusetts Family Business of the Year Awards, as well as by the New Hampshire Sign Association Awards for the company's excellence in signmaking.

Since its founding in 1938, Poyant Signs has played a central role in the development of New Bedford's local economy. The company is emblematic of the type of business that makes New Bedford the great city that it is today, and it is certainly fitting to celebrate this company's many years of success.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Poyant Signs upon the company's seventy-fifth anniversary. I ask that my colleagues join me in this recognition and in congratulating Poyant Signs for its many decades of prosperity.

THEY GOT TO TEXAS AS FAST AS
THEY COULD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, from the establishment of our great State, people have traveled from all over the world to come to Texas either to live, to work or to visit. Before Texas was a state, some even came to fight

for us. Many of the soldiers that fought in the battle at the Alamo were from different states and even a few countries. The diversity of people that have traveled to the state since the 1800's has contributed to its vast culture. That has made Texas what it is today.

Today, Texas' diversity is expansive and includes the contributions of many different cultures that help make Texas' own culture that much more unique. From the numerous Vietnamese Pho restaurants in downtown Houston to the German Karbach Brewery in North Houston, the global influence on Houston's culture is immense.

The Houston Chronicle recently reported about a Houston historian who focused on determining how streets in Houston-area communities received their names. Many settlers provided the names for not only cities and counties but for streets in local communities as well. Spring Branch, a community in the Second Congressional District of Texas, had several streets named after early immigrant settlers from Germany. Most of the early settlers were German farmers who came to the United States in pursuit of prosperity and to have land to farm. The City of Houston was named after the great Sam Houston, who was of Scots-Irish descent and originally from Virginia. The county that encompasses Houston, Harris County, was named after John Richardson Harris, a settler who came to Texas from New York by way of Missouri.

As the saying goes, if you weren't born in Texas, you got there as fast as you could.

People from around the world continue to hang a "Gone to Texas" sign on their front door. Our Texas pride comes from our rich history, a history that was built by the contributions of many local heroes and leaders who simply got to Texas as fast as they could. And that's just the way it is.

OLIVIA FOUSEL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Olivia Fousel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Olivia Fousel is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversity.

The dedication demonstrated by Olivia Fousel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Olivia Fousel for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.